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General Assembly

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Official Records

87th plenary meeting
Thursday, 15 June 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 112 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council

The President: The General Assembly will now proceed to by-elections to elect members of the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with rule 140 of the rules of procedure.

I would first like to draw the attention of members to documents A/71/923 and A/71/924, which contain the texts of letters, dated 19 May and 8 June 2017 respectively, from the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Romania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly.

In his letter, the Permanent Representative of Romania, in his capacity as Chair of the Group of Eastern European States for the month of June, announces that Bosnia and Herzegovina will relinquish its seat on the Economic and Social Council for its remaining term in favour of Romania, as of 31 December 2017.

In his letter, the Permanent Representative of Austria, in his capacity as Chair of the Group of Western European and other States for the month of May, announces that Australia will relinquish its seat on the Economic and Social Council for its remaining term in favour of Canada, as of 31 December 2017, and that Sweden will relinquish its seat on the Economic and Social Council for its remaining term in favour of Denmark, as of 31 December 2017.

As a result, three vacancies will occur and new members must therefore be elected to fill the unexpired terms of office of Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sweden, commencing on 1 January 2018 and expiring on 31 December 2018, in the case of Australia, and 31 December 2019, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sweden.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 2847 (XXVI), of 20 December 1971, and taking into account the number of States that will remain members of the Council after 1 January 2017, the members should be elected as follows: one from among the Group of Eastern European States and two from among the Group of Western European and other States. The ballot papers reflect that pattern.

I should like to inform the Assembly that those candidates — their number not exceeding the number of seats to be filled — that receive a two-thirds majority and the greatest number of votes by members present and voting will be declared elected. Consistent with past practice, in the case of a tie vote making it necessary to determine the candidate to be elected or that will proceed to the next round of restricted balloting, there will be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to these procedures?

It was so decided.

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The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the Assembly's rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot, and there shall be no nominations.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed accordingly.

I should like to inform members that, as of 1 January 2018, the following States from among the Group of Eastern European States and the Group of Western European and other States will be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Andorra, Azerbaijan, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy, Norway, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The names of those 10 States should therefore not appear on the ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting. In addition, ballot papers will be given only to the representative seated directly behind the country's name plate.

We shall now begin the voting process. I request representatives to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

I should like to remind members that they are voting in the by-election for one seat for the Eastern European States and two seats for the Western European and other States. The election of 18 members of the Economic and Social Council will take place immediately following the by-election.

Ballot papers marked "A" and "B" will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the names of the States for which they wish to vote. A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains more names of Member States from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if none of the names of the Member States on that ballot belongs to the relevant region. If a ballot paper of a region contains both the names of Member States that belong to and that are outside that region, the ballot remains valid but only the names of the Member States that belong to the relevant region will be counted. The names of Member States that do not belong to that region will not be counted.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A — Eastern European States (1 seat)

Number of ballot papers:	186
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	186
Abstentions:	4
Number of members voting:	182
Required two-thirds majority:	122
Number of votes obtained:	
Romania	172
Belarus	9
Bulgaria	1

Group B — Western European and other States (2 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	186
Number of invalid ballots:	2
Number of valid ballots:	184
Abstentions:	9
Number of members voting:	175
Required two-thirds majority:	117
Number of votes obtained:	
Denmark	167
Canada	166
France	4
Germany	3
Spain	3
Turkey	3
Ireland	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Canada, Denmark and Romania were elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2018 and ending on 31 December 2018, in the case of Canada, and 31 December 2019, in the cases of Denmark and Romania.

The President: I congratulate Canada, Denmark and Romania on having been elected members of the Economic and Social Council.

The General Assembly will next turn to the election of 18 members of the Economic and Social Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2017.

The 18 outgoing members are: Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Estonia, France, Germany, Ghana, Honduras, India, Ireland, Japan, Mauritania, Pakistan,

Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Pursuant to rule 146 of the rules of procedure, those countries are eligible for immediate re-election.

Members will recall that Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sweden relinquished their seats in the Economic and Social Council effective 1 January 2018, and that Canada, Denmark and Romania have just been elected to fill those vacancies.

Consequently, as of 1 January 2018, the following States will be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Benin, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Guyana, Iraq, Italy, Lebanon, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Somalia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tajikistan, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Viet Nam. The names of those 36 States should therefore not appear on the ballots.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 2847 (XXVI), of 20 December 1971, and taking into account the number of States that will remain members of the Council after 1 January 2018, the 18 members should be elected as follows: five from among the Group of African States, three from among the Group of Asia-Pacific States, one from among the Group of Eastern European States, four from among the Group of Latin American and the Caribbean States and five from among the Group of Western European and other States. The ballot papers reflect that pattern.

I should like to inform the Assembly that those candidates, their number not exceeding the number of seats to be filled, who receive a two-thirds majority and the greatest number of votes by members present and voting will be declared elected.

Also, consistent with past practice, in case that due to a tie vote it becomes necessary to determine the candidate to be elected or to proceed to the next round of restricted balloting, there will be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to these procedures?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot, and there shall be no nominations.

Regarding candidatures for the respective regional groups, the Secretariat has been informed that for the five vacant seats from among the Group of African States, the Group has endorsed five candidates: Ghana, Malawi, Morocco, the Sudan and Togo. For the three vacant seats from among the Group of Asia-Pacific States, the Group has endorsed three candidates: India, Japan and the Philippines. For the one vacant seat from among the Group of Eastern European States, the Group has endorsed one candidate: Belarus.

For the four vacant seats from among the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Group has endorsed four candidates: Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Uruguay. For the five vacant seats from among the Group of Western European and other States, the Group has endorsed five candidates: France, Germany, Ireland, Spain and Turkey.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the election by secret ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting. In addition, ballot papers will be given only to the representative seated directly behind the country's name plate.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "A", "B", "C", "D" and "E" will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the names of the States for which they wish to vote. A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains more names of Member States from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if none of the names of the Member States on that ballot belong to the relevant region.

If a ballot paper of a region contains both the names of the Member States that belong to and that are outside of that region, the ballot remains valid, but only the names of the Member States that belong to the relevant region will be counted. The names of Member States that do not belong to that region will not be counted.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Regis (Haiti), Ms. Vangansuren (Mongolia), Ms. Schot (New Zealand), Mr. Jamal-Hariri (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Ramazanov (Ukraine) and Mr. Phiri (Zambia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.25 a.m.

The President: The results of the voting are as follows:

Group A — African States (5 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	188
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	188
Required two-thirds majority:	126
Number of votes obtained:	
Malawi	184
Togo	184
Ghana	183
Morocco	177
Sudan	175
Tunisia	1
Zambia	1

Group B — Asian and Pacific States (3 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	188
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	188
Required two-thirds majority:	126
Number of votes obtained:	
Japan	185
India	183
Philippines	182
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	1
Pakistan	1

Group C — Eastern European States (1 seat)

Number of ballot papers:	188
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	3
Number of members voting:	185
Required two-thirds majority:	124
Number of votes obtained:	
Belarus	182
Estonia	1
Montenegro	1
Ukraine	1

Group D — Latin American and Caribbean States (4 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	188
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	187
Required two-thirds majority:	125
Number of votes obtained:	
Ecuador	182
Mexico	182
El Salvador	181
Uruguay	180
Cuba	2

Group E — Western European and other States (5 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	188
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	3
Number of members voting:	185
Required two-thirds majority:	124
Number of votes obtained:	
Germany	182
Spain	181
Ireland	180
Turkey	179
France	177
Israel	1
Liechtenstein	1
Switzerland	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority and the largest number of votes of the members of the General Assembly, the following 18 States were elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2018: Belarus, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Ireland, Japan, Malawi, Mexico, Morocco, the Philippines, Spain, the Sudan, Togo, Turkey and Uruguay.

The President: I congratulate those States that have been elected members of the Economic and Social Council and I thank the tellers for their assistance.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 112.

Agenda item 118

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Draft resolution (A/71/L.66)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/71/918)

The President: Before proceeding to consider draft resolution A/71/L.66, I would like to remind members that the debate on agenda item 118 will take place at a later date, to be announced.

The General Assembly meets today to renew its

> "unwavering commitment to strengthening international cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations"

and to reaffirm

> "that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed".

It is in the spirit of that commitment that the draft resolution establishing the Office of Counter-Terrorism is presented today. The draft resolution will enhance the capability of the United Nations to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy across its four pillars by ensuring greater coordination and coherence across the Organization's system and by improving visibility, advocacy and resource mobilization for United Nations counter-terrorism efforts. I would like to thank all delegations for working cooperatively and constructively throughout the consultation process and for supporting my Office in securing today's draft resolution, the first major institutional reform presented by Secretary-General Guterres, and I commend it to the Assembly.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/71/L.66, entitled "Strengthening the capability of the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.66?

Draft resolution A/71/L.66 was adopted (resolution 71/291).

The President: Before giving the floor to those wishing to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, I would like to remind delegations that statements are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Grant (Canada): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of Australia and New Zealand as well as my own country, Canada. We welcome the General Assembly's adoption today of resolution 71/291 and its creation of the Office of Counter-Terrorism and a position for a new Under-Secretary-General. This update of the United Nations architecture comes after our three countries have worked for a number of years advocating that the Organization's counter-terrorism structures be made fit for purpose. We see these changes as contributing to the Secretary-General's overall objective of improving the focus of the prevention efforts of the United Nations.

Today's resolution comes at a time when we all face the evolving threat that terrorism represents, and we need to work together even harder than before to prevent and respond to it and to violent extremism. We look forward to seeing the Office established and the Under-Secretary-General selected as soon as possible. It is critical to ensure that the new Office will oversee a balanced implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, including the prevention of violent extremism. As we have said before, we expect the position to be filled by a senior, highly qualified and credible individual in the field. It is imperative to ensure that the individual selected has experience across the key sectors of development, human rights and security. Simply put, we need the best person for the job.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand look forward to working with the new Office and Under-Secretary-General in the coming months.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia (MIKTA). MIKTA is a cross-regional partnership of five countries of diverse cultures and regions that share core values and similarities and are like-minded on many of the global challenges we face today. Of those

challenges, terrorism and violent extremism, in all their forms and manifestations, present a global threat to which no country is immune. As a result, MIKTA has established counter-terrorism as one of its core areas of collaboration in contributing to greater global peace and stability. Bearing that in mind, at their eighth meeting, held in Sydney in November 2016, the MIKTA Foreign Ministers adopted their latest communiqué, reaffirming their collective resolve to counter and prevent terrorism and violent extremism. The Foreign Ministers furthermore stated that they stood united against that scourge, which knows no borders, respects no beliefs and has no respect for human rights. Indeed, terrorism and violent extremism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. The MIKTA countries, which play a pivotal role in United Nations global counter-terrorism efforts, therefore welcome today's adoption of resolution 71/291, on reform of the United Nations global counter-terrorism architecture and the establishment of a United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, to be led by an Under-Secretary-General.

We would like to express our full support for the Secretary-General's initiative and his commitment to adapting the United Nations system to the ever-evolving threat of terrorism. They herald his first a major institutional reform of the United Nations since he took office. In that regard, the MIKTA countries would like to stress the importance of delivering counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to Member States, at their request, in a timely, adequate and effective manner, and to emphasize that the new Office of Counter-Terrorism would not be empowered to monitor, supervise or interfere with efforts by Member States to implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the rest of the international legal framework with regard to counter-terrorism.

The MIKTA countries would like to express their sincere hope that the present reform will contribute to the balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy across its four pillars; enhance strategic coordination and the coherence of United Nations counter-terrorism activities, both within the United Nations system and with relevant external actors, in order to create synergies and avoid duplication; ensure respect for international law, including international human rights law; continue to guide United Nations counter-terrorism efforts; and ensure that the voice of the United Nations on issues regarding counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism will be better heard in the international community. With that understanding, and with the ultimate goal of defeating the scourge of terrorism, MIKTA countries look forward to swift implementation of the reform and today's resolution, and to constructive engagement with the new United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism.

Mr. Al Arsan (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation joined the consensus this morning. From the outset, we have supported the recommendations of the Secretary-General with regard to strengthening the capacity of the United Nations counter-terrorism system. That springs from our belief that this topic should be a priority, since terrorism is the number-one threat to peace and security all over the word. The recommendations of the Secretary-General in that regard, especially for the creation of an Office of Counter-Terrorism, to be headed by a new Under-Secretary-General, are a quantum leap forward in addressing that universal threat. They coincide exactly with the requests that Syria has been making for decades, especially concerning the terrorism that we have been enduring and that is funded, managed and condoned by the Governments of some Member States.

However, at the same time my Government is of the view that the Office of Counter-Terrorism can be independent and truly efficient only if it is totally free of the politicization and financial polarization that are used by the Governments of certain Member States to serve their own interests and agendas and that would ultimately be an obstacle to the goals of the Office. That is why my delegation has reservations about paragraph 3 of resolution 71/291, adopted this morning. We reiterate our determination to reconsider that paragraph during any periodic or regular revision of the resolution, whether in the Fifth or Sixth Committee. It is a very serious and unjustified precedent that confers on the Government of a certain State some prerogatives and privileges in the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre at a time when, as everyone knows, that country is itself contributing to terrorism.

The provisions of paragraph 3 are an offence to the collective work of the United Nations because they run counter to the purposes and principles of its Charter, and that is why we are shocked at the Centre's double standards. There is no way that it should receive more than $100 million in funds from the Saudi system and regime when that same regime persistently violates

Security Council resolutions by providing armed terrorist groups in Syria with billions of dollars, as well as by spending hundreds of millions of dollars in centres all over the world that claim to be taking up the call for religion when they are actually advocating for Wahhabi extremism and working to sow the seeds of sectarianism in our countries. Those infamous Saudi centres have been recruiting thousands of young people and sending them as foreign terrorist combatants to fight in the ranks of Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and the other relevant terrorist groups.

In various United Nations forums, in various reports that we have submitted, and in the information that we have provided to various United Nations agencies, we have reiterated the facts about the support of certain Member States, such as Saudi Arabia, for terrorism in Syria. They are not mere political accusations but facts known to everyone, and they have even been confirmed by certain reports issued by various committees and institutions.

What we are witnessing today in the Gulf area and in all the disagreements going on between Gulf regimes is a demonstration of the practices of those regimes, which have an insatiable desire to destroy our States and manipulate the futures and destinies of people. They use terrorism as a tool to advance their own agendas and interests with complete disregard for global security and stability.

We have also said that terrorism knows no religion and has no identity. However, the most dangerous enemy for Arabs and Muslims today is the race between Saudi Arabia and Qatar to use political Islam in a way that offends both Arabs and Islam. What they are really engaged in is a race of hypocrisy. In that regard, I would like to quote the writer Fareed Zakaria in *The Washington Post*:

> "It's true that Qatar has supported some extremist Islamist movements. So has Saudi Arabia. Both are Wahhabi countries, both have within them extremist preachers, and both are widely believed to have armed Islamist groups in Syria and elsewhere. In both cases, the royal families play a game of allying themselves with fundamentalist religious forces and funding some militants, even while fighting other violent groups."

Donating $100 million for the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre or spending more than $500 billion on arms and weapons will never absolve the Saudi regime of its support of terrorism and its adoption of violent extremism, which has spilled the blood of thousands upon thousands of innocent people in my country, Syria, and which continues to claim hundreds of lives all over the world.

Finally, my Government is hopeful and confident that the new Under-Secretary-General appointed to head the Office of Counter-Terrorism will be careful, neutral, efficient and comprehensive and that the Under-Secretary-General will be from a country that respects the shared principles and the rules of procedure of the Organization, in particular with regard to sovereign equality and rights among Member States. We are also confident that the new Under-Secretary-General will reject double standards and avoid political and financial tension and polarization, while observing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): I am taking the floor to congratulate you, Sir, and your Office on bringing this process to a swift and expeditious conclusion, resulting in today's adoption of resolution 71/291. I also take this opportunity to compliment the Secretary-General on his earnest efforts on the issue.

This is the first of the Secretary-General's reform initiatives, which has come to fruition through the General Assembly. The Assembly's unanimity on the issue demonstrates the importance that Member States give to collective and coordinated action on terrorism, which remains the most complex threat that the international community faces. India believes that the creation of the Office of Counter-Terrorism is a long-awaited first step in our efforts to enhance the coordination of United Nations counter-terrorism efforts. It will align the Organization with the changed global reality and the international community's needs, as the Secretary-General himself articulated yesterday in Kabul — a city ravaged by terrorists. He mentioned the reform and said that support for terrorism carried a very high price.

Terrorist networks are not limited by the borders, norms, legal frameworks or bureaucratic inertia that constrain us as Member States and the United Nations at all levels. While terrorist networks use modern platforms such as social media and cyberspace, and exist in parallel worlds alongside us in hidden transnational networks, we cannot work in silos created either by boundaries or by bureaucracy. There was

never a stronger case for more multilateral action, coordination and cooperation on any matter among all stakeholders than with regard to terrorism today. An all-of-United Nations approach and a certain convening power on counter-terrorism issues will be crucial if the new Office of Counter-Terrorism is to fulfil its functions effectively.

The Office should not only engage Member States at a high political level, it should also cooperate with other international organizations dealing with issues relating to terrorism in order to fulfil its mandate effectively. It is also important to build the United Nations narrative on counter-terrorism for the ordinary people who are threatened by this scourge. It is now time to reap the benefits of the early harvest of reform. For its part, in that regard, India will continue to work with other Member States to guide and steer the steps of the United Nations as part of the international community's collective response to one of the gravest challenges facing humankind today.

Mr. Kravik (Norway): Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for his efforts to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. I would also like to thank the Office of the President of the General Assembly for working so tirelessly and expeditiously to ensure today's adoption of resolution 71/291, establishing the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism.

More than ever, we need an effective, cohesive and adaptable United Nations that is equipped to counter and tackle the challenges posed by terrorism and violent extremism. The creation of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism represents a major step forward in that regard. Headed by an Under-Secretary-General reporting directly to the Secretary-General, the Office will give the United Nations more coherence and provide for better strategic leadership and external and internal communication. It will promote the United Nations system's ability to implement all four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in a cohesive and coordinated way. Our ability to mobilize resources and support from Member States through capacity-building efforts and the sharing of best practices will be manifestly enhanced.

Since 2006, when the United Nations adopted its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, there has been too much emphasis on combating terrorism by military and security means. We must also address the root causes and upstream factors of violent extremism, as highlighted by the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. The responsibilities of the Under-Secretary-General and the Office will be to ensure an appropriate balance and emphasis across all four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We therefore appreciate the fact that the mandate of the Office of Counter-Terrorism includes a reference to preventing the violent extremism agenda.

As part of its efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism, the Office must work to advance peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and the rule of law, and to institutionalize the prevention of violent extremism across the United Nations system. We also believe that it must partner and interact with civil society and other non-governmental stakeholders in order to be effective. One key qualification for the position of Under-Secretary-General should be that the successful candidate will have experience in both development and security and a demonstrated ability to work inclusively, cooperating effectively with a range of stakeholders, including civi-society actors.

Mr. Nasimfar (Islamic Republic of Iran): We joined the consensus on resolution 71/291, which we have just adopted. Indeed, we support the principle of the initiative of the Secretary-General in bringing reform to the counter-terrorism structure and creating the Office of Counter-Terrorism, headed by an Under-Secretary-General. The new structure has the potential to enhance the coordination of counter-terrorism-related activities across the United Nations system and to expand United Nations capacity for addressing the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism better and more effectively. However, in our view, further structural improvement is still needed to ensure the efficiency, impartiality, transparency and predictability of the activities of the Office of Counter-Terrorism.

In our view, resolution 71/291 fails to address the following issues. First, it is imperative that sufficient financial resources for the Office of Counter-Terrorism be allocated from the United Nations regular budget. We note with concern that in the new structure most of the positions will be funded through voluntary funds, which could seriously imperil the impartiality and efficiency of the Office of Counter-Terrorism. Secondly, transparency and inclusiveness are among the core United Nations principles that should be upheld and mainstreamed in all areas of United Nations

counter-terrorism activities — including the United Nations Centre for Counter-Terrorism (UNCCT) and its Advisory Board.

In our view, the UNCCT should be reformed in order to clearly reflect those main principles. Given the Centre's important role in providing capacity-building projects to Member States, transparency and inclusiveness in its Advisory Board should be guaranteed. We are of the view that the Centre should be bound by United Nations rules and regulations. The Centre might have seen some exceptions in that regard at its inception, but after years of operation under the United Nations system, it must be brought up to the level of other regular United Nations entities.

We are of the view that the members of the Advisory Board should be elected in a transparent process following consultations with regional groups and after meeting specific conditions set by the Assembly. That would meet the basic requirement for equal opportunity for the entire United Nations membership in connection with active participation and effective engagement in its activities, and would pave the way for more voluntary and other forms of support from a larger percentage of the general membership.

For the sake of transparency, it is important that the terms of reference of the Office be negotiated by Member States and adopted by the General Assembly. We would therefore expect the members of the Advisory Board to be elected in April 2018 in accordance with the transparently negotiated terms of reference.

Mr. Roet (Israel): My delegation would first like to offer its condolences to the families of the victims of the shocking terror attacks that have recently taken place around the globe in the United Kingdom, Egypt, Somalia and many other places, and that have once again shaken our world to its core. The countless lives lost every day to terror makes that threat the top priority of almost every country represented in this Hall. As terrorism grows, our common responsibility to defeat it together grows ever more urgent.

Israel welcomes today's adoption by consensus of resolution 71/291, which establishes the Office of Counter-Terrorism, to be led by an Under-Secretary-General. We thank Secretary-General Guterres for taking a strong stand against the constant threat of terror around the world. His efforts and insistence in establishing the new Office are a step in the right direction. We would also like to express our appreciation for the constructive and transparent way in which the process was conducted. We also extend our gratitude to you, Mr. President, and your Office for your tireless work in promoting this resolution. We have discussed the fragmented nature of the Organization's counter-terrorism strategy here in the Hall. Although 38 United Nations entities are working to combat terrorism, we lack an overarching voice to guide their efforts. This resolution has the potential to be that voice, and we look forward to working closely with it.

The new counter-terrorism architecture will not only improve efficiency and coherence, it can also help turn the United Nations into a relevant actor in overcoming the challenges that terrorism poses in the twenty-first century. But that goal can be achieved only if we do not surrender to the attempt to politicize the issue. Terror is terror, and we must respond with the same urgency and vigilance wherever it strikes, whether it be through the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, Hizbullah, Boko Haram, Hamas or any other terror group. Our response must grow alongside the constantly evolving terror tactics of those organizations. Terror is terror, wherever it is.

Israel has dealt with the threat of terror since its inception in 1948. Out of that daily necessity, we have become expert in counter-terrorism and have developed technologies and tools for counter-terrorism unmatched by almost any other country. We understand and recognize that the only way to combat that threat is by staying ahead of the game and anticipating the terrorists' next step. We in the international community must do the same and act together to combat the terror threat of tomorrow. Serious international threats require serious international responses. Only if we stand united can we defeat global terrorism and stop those who seek to undermine our way of life.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia): The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia commends the Secretary-General for giving priority to strengthening the United Nations counter-terrorism capability in order to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in a balanced and comprehensive manner. We thank him and you, Sir, for the consultative approach that you have taken throughout the process of establishing the Office of Counter-Terrorism, and we support resolution 71/291, which we have just adopted.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia recognizes the need to enhance coherence and coordination across counter-terrorism activities carried out by the United Nations and, in that regard, views the establishment of the Office as a necessary step towards achieving that goal. As everyone knows, Saudi Arabia is heavily invested in the success of the overall United Nations counter-terrorism architecture. We are therefore pleased to see that the new Office will take on the current functions and responsibilities of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and its Advisory Board. We are also pleased that all funding and contribution agreements between donors and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre will remain dedicated to the execution of its intended projects and will not be diverted to other administrative requirements.

We look forward to a smooth transfer of counter-terrorism activities from the Department of Political Affairs to the newly established Office of Counter-Terrorism. As Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's group on counter-terrorism, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia represents the group of countries most affected by the scourge of international terrorism, and we look forward to constructively and actively engaging with the Office of Counter-Terrorism.

It is also essential to reiterate that terrorism should not be associated with any religion, race or ethnicity. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stands ready to share its insights and expertise to facilitate the effective functioning of the Office, and we will do our part to help ensure its early and sustained success.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

We have always insisted on distancing the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre from any kind of political pressure. It is with regret that we heard the statement made earlier by the representative of Syria who — as the Arab expression goes — infected us with a problem and left us with it. The Syrian regime is guilty of a number of human rights violations. It uses chemical weapons, missiles and barrel bombs. The Syrian regime resorts to torture and at times even collective torture. Such a regime has no place in a discussion on terrorism because its hands are stained with the blood of its own people.

The regime has been condemned by numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, as well as by other United Nations bodies. Such attacks are unacceptable, and Syria is not in any position to make them. Furthermore, the representative of Syria has no right to address issues concerning the Gulf. We call on Syria to end the terrorist attacks carried out by groups supported by the regime, including Hizbullah.

Concerning the statement by the representative of Iran, I wholeheartedly welcome his constructive remarks, in particular with regard to the need to support United Nations counter-terrorism activities in the framework of budgetary decisions, so as to ensure a greater level of transparency and respect for the norms of the United Nations. I would like to assure everyone that all those norms were respected within the framework of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, which represents all countries. The Advisory Board is an independent body that has oversight over the Centre's activities and submits quarterly and annual reports to all members of the United Nations. The Advisory Board also welcomes all proposals and recommendations that would enhance transparency, as well as all proposals coming from countries that support the Centre's work. We thank the representative of Iran for his comments and assure him that the Centre will take them under consideration.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position. We shall now hear statements following the adoption of resolution 71/291.

I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Adamson (European Union): We thank you, Mr. President, for facilitating today's adoption of resolution 71/291.

The European Union (EU) and its member States have contributed to the process constructively and substantively, and we are pleased that today we have taken this important institutional step. The establishment of the new Office of Counter-Terrorism should be seen as a necessary first step aimed at improving the role of the United Nations and its impact on countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

We welcome the fact that the new Under-Secretary-General and the Office of Counter-Terrorism are set to address the prevention of violent extremism as a core part of their responsibility for implementing the whole Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in a balanced manner, as stipulated in the Secretary-General's report (A/71/858). That also resonates with the overall prevention agenda of the Secretary-General, which the EU and its member States fully endorse. We strongly

support the Secretary-General's proposal to establish the new Office, headed by an Under-Secretary-General who will provide strategic leadership, participate in high-level decision-making at the United Nations and ensure that cross-cutting drivers of terrorism and violent extremism are taken into account in the work of the Organization. We are confident that the new Under-Secretary-General will be eminently qualified, with experience in counter-terrorism as well as United Nations policies, including those on human rights, gender equality and development.

Needless to say, it is important to have more effective and efficient coordination within the overall United Nations system and between the United Nations and other international organizations and forums. Within the mandates of the existing entities, it will be necessary to establish more linkages and foster a spirit of systematic cooperation, as well as to evaluate and monitor the impact of United Nations efforts in the future.

The EU and its member States want a strong and efficient United Nations, capable of driving the global agenda on counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism while taking a balanced approach across the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. To achieve that, we are committed to closely cooperating with the newly established Office of Counter-Terrorism and with the Under-Secretary-General, as soon as he or she is appointed.

The President: Before giving the floor to the speaker in exercise of the right of reply, may I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Al Arsan (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): In Syria we do not like proverbs, but it would appear that Saudi Arabia does. We are not manipulating the situation but rather attempting to state it clearly as it stands. Saudi Arabia must allow the Syrian people to enjoy their right to exercise their own rights. Saudi Arabia should not interfere in the domestic affairs of Syria and should stop financing terrorist groups, because they are promoting Wahhabi attacks. We note that that ideology is gaining ground. My country is a sovereign State. We have a Constitution and domestic legislation. We are not looking for revenge or to promote Wahhabi ideology. Our army and allies will continue to fight terrorism and the extremist Wahhabi ideology behind it, an ideology supported by Saudi Arabia and its allies.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 118.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.